AMERICAN CHRISTIAN MARKETPLACE AUTHORITY

Community Implementation Series / Charter Schools

Community Helping Community

Charter School Pilot Proposal

ACMA-CS-01 | Pilot Proposal

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Everyday stability. Community resilience.

Executive summary

Community Helping Community proposes a voluntary, twelve-month charter school pilot to discover and activate the resources already present within a school community. By connecting families with relevant skills, relationships and practical assistance, the pilot seeks to reduce barriers to student and family stability, strengthen belonging, and develop capacity for disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

The school provides a trusted mechanism for confidential introductions while preserving local authority, participant choice and existing educational obligations. The pilot is designed to be adaptable and replicable, without requiring affiliation with a central organization.

Proposal at a glance

Purpose	Activate existing community resources
Population	Adult members of a defined charter school community
Duration	Suggested 12 months
Companion tools	ACMA-CS-02 Implementation Handbook; ACMA-CS-03 Community Resource Inventory

Decision requested

Approve development of a locally governed pilot, subject to appropriate operational, legal, privacy and safety review.

1. Foundational philosophy

The American Christian Marketplace Authority (ACMA) is a framework for helping people identify, connect and voluntarily activate resources within communities to which they already belong. Rather than creating another institution to serve families, Community Helping Community seeks to develop the capacity of families to serve one another. Time, talent, treasure, experience and relationships are all forms of community wealth. Participation is voluntary, and every person has value regardless of financial circumstances.

2. Why charter schools?

Charter schools are uniquely positioned to explore this model because they bring together families around a shared educational mission. Parents, guardians, grandparents and staff represent a broad range of occupations, skills, businesses and life experiences. The school can serve as a trusted connector without becoming a comprehensive social service agency. The model can be adapted to the school’s size, mission and existing family engagement practices.

3. Barriers beyond the classroom

A student’s ability to thrive may be affected by circumstances outside the school’s control: housing instability, parental unemployment, transportation problems, family crises or limited access to educational resources. These challenges cannot always be addressed through classroom instruction. A voluntary network of community resources may help families address some of these barriers while preserving dignity and independence.

4. A model for every charter school

High-performing schools need not wait for declining achievement to strengthen their communities. They can serve as laboratories for innovation, demonstrating a model that other schools may adapt. Schools facing greater barriers to achievement may use the same framework to identify unmet needs and mobilize existing capacity. The objective is not to impose a uniform program, but to make a practical approach available across different educational environments.

5. Pilot research question

Can a charter school improve family stability, community belonging and resilience by identifying and voluntarily connecting resources already present within its community? The pilot will explore whether this approach can address practical barriers, strengthen relationships and operate with manageable administrative costs. Student achievement and attendance may be monitored where appropriate, without assuming that changes are caused by the pilot.

6. Community resource inventory

Invite adult members of the school community to identify resources they may be willing to share: employment opportunities, housing connections, transportation, tutoring, professional expertise, skilled trades, household assistance, equipment, financial generosity and disaster-related capabilities. The inventory is not a pledge or public directory. It is a confidential discovery tool. See ACMA-CS-03 for a customizable questionnaire.

7. What community assistance could look like

Employment: A parent who owns a business introduces an unemployed parent to a suitable job opportunity. Housing: A property owner shares information about an available rental with a family facing displacement. Transportation: A mechanic helps a parent identify affordable vehicle repairs. Education: A qualified adult provides approved tutoring. Family crisis: Community members coordinate meals or practical support following an unexpected disruption. These are illustrative examples, not guaranteed services.

8. Operating model

Discover: Collect voluntary resource information. Identify: Receive confidential requests for assistance. Evaluate: Screen requests for eligibility, safety and fit. Connect: Confirm willingness and obtain mutual consent before introductions. Activate: Allow participants to arrange appropriate assistance within approved boundaries. Follow up: Determine whether the connection helped. Learn: Document aggregate outcomes and refine the model. ACMA-CS-02 provides detailed operating procedures.

9. The role of the school

The school acts as a trusted connector, not a guarantor of assistance, employer, landlord, lender or emergency response agency. Designated personnel maintain a secure resource registry, receive requests, facilitate approved introductions and evaluate results. The school retains authority over the scope of the pilot and may refer needs to existing services or qualified external organizations.

10. From transactions to relationships

Traditional assistance often begins with a program and identifies eligible recipients. This model begins with a community and discovers what its members can offer one another. A family receiving assistance today may possess resources that benefit someone else tomorrow. No contribution, repayment or future participation should be required in exchange for help. The objective is belonging, not a permanent distinction between providers and recipients.

11. Character education in practice

Schools often teach responsibility, generosity, citizenship and respect. Community Helping Community provides an opportunity for adults to demonstrate these values through practical action. Students may witness the importance of caring for others, recognizing human dignity and contributing to a shared community. Any student involvement must be age-appropriate, voluntary where applicable, and consistent with school safeguards.

12. Legal, privacy and safety safeguards

Before launch, leadership should review applicable privacy laws, including FERPA where relevant, consent, volunteer screening, child protection, mandatory reporting, professional licensing, insurance, nondiscrimination and accessibility. Public charter schools must operate the pilot in a religiously neutral manner. Participation must not affect enrollment or access to educational services. The model does not replace legally required school services. Personal information should be restricted, and introductions require appropriate consent.

13. Financial and operational sustainability

Begin with a manageable population and a limited number of assistance categories. Use existing approved communication tools and designate a coordinator. Budget for staff time, screening, technology, legal review, insurance and evaluation. Avoid unnecessary administrative infrastructure. Any school-administered financial assistance requires separate approval and accounting controls. Expand only when demonstrated capacity and safeguards support expansion.

14. Measuring success

Track household participation, diversity of available resources, eligible requests, introductions, full and partial resolutions, response time, participant-reported stability and belonging, administrative cost, safety concerns and resource gaps. Assess emergency communication readiness and recovery capabilities. Establish baseline measures before activation and report aggregate outcomes to leadership. Do not equate activity alone with effectiveness.

15. Community resilience and disaster management

The relationships and resource awareness developed during everyday operations can also support mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Before a disaster, identify skills, equipment, communication capabilities and qualified partners. During disruptions, coordinate only approved, safe assistance consistent with school emergency plans and official response. During recovery, facilitate housing, employment, transportation, educational continuity and small business recovery connections. Participants must not self-deploy into hazardous areas. The model complements rather than replaces emergency responders. Independent communities may voluntarily cooperate when needs exceed local capacity.

16. Proposed implementation timeline

Months 1–2: Design the pilot, obtain leadership authorization, establish safeguards and baseline measures. Months 3–4: Conduct the resource inventory, build the secure registry and train coordinators. Months 5–10: Activate approved matching, monitor outcomes and conduct a preparedness exercise. Months 11–12: Evaluate results, document lessons and determine whether to continue, modify or expand.

17. Replication and leadership request

Authorize development of a twelve-month pilot; designate an executive sponsor and development team; establish an initial participating population, budget and evaluation plan; require legal, privacy, insurance and safety review before activation; and receive a final report. Share de-identified lessons and adaptable procedures with other charter schools. Each school retains independent governance and may tailor the framework to its own community.

18. Conclusion

What if the solution is already among us? A school community may possess far more capacity than it has ever thought to identify. By connecting people who need help with people who have something to give, schools can strengthen families, demonstrate shared values and build resilience before extraordinary circumstances arise. Community is not merely something a school has. Community is something a school can activate.

Implementation notice

This proposal is an adaptable planning resource, not legal advice or authorization to provide regulated services. Schools are responsible for local approvals and compliance.